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PROFESSOR SANDSTONE AND HIS YOUNG FRIENDS.

THERE is nothing more calculated to administer an intellectual fillip—a mental 'pick-me-up'—to one's system, than the occasional society of those with whose pursuits we have nothing in common. A butterfly-fancier, or a fern-collector, is probably not only dull himself, but the cause of dullness in other people when placed among purely entomological or botanical persons; the Skipper of a vessel may lose all individuality in the company of sailors, a master of hounds may do so among fox-hunters; but if the butterfly-fancier meet the skipper, or the fern-collector the Son of Nimrod, it is almost certain that all will receive and impart some interesting information. Each will take care to divest himself of his technicalities as much as possible, in order to make himself intelligible to his companions; and since there can be no temptation to argue about details, will delineate for him, broadly and strikingly, the most noticeable features of his peculiar study.

A man who wraps himself up wholly in one profession, whether it be law or leather-making, billiards or pure mathematics, philosophy or dog-fancying, does himself no benefit by so doing, even as respects that one pursuit. It was not unwisely remarked of William Wordsworth, that if he had been a faster man he would have been a better poet. He never got intoxicated, it seems, but once, and even that was in the celebration of Milton's birthday in a half-professional sort of way; and his views of human life were defective in consequence. For my own part (to speak truth without novelty), *Homo sum et nihil humani a me alienum puto*, I feel equally at home in the society of a diver or an aeronaut; and would just as soon sit on the same coach-box (if he didn't drive) with a Jumper as with a Quietist—which I suppose is the opposite end of the theological scale.

When, therefore, Professor Sandstone offered to take me to the Barton cliffs the other day (some twelve miles from where we are both temporarily residing), and to lend me a geological hammer, I accepted his invitation with avidity, although I know nothing of that science of which he is so distinguished an ornament; and when he said we should find the Nummulites there, 'a most interesting family,' I imagined he referred to some people with whom he

expected we should lunch. At the same time, I was not without an idea that there had better be some relief from Sandstone in case he got too deep in the strata, so I persuaded Tootawun (who keeps race-horses) to accompany us on our excursion, and impart that lively tone for which he is so justly celebrated to what might otherwise be too improving conversation.

Even outwardly my two companions afforded an extraordinary contrast. Tootawun was attired as usual, notwithstanding the (for him) unprecedentedly early hour at which we started, within half an inch of his life, and carried an umbrella like a fairy's wand. The professor, on the other hand, clothed in somewhat seedy black, with his hammers and canvas wallet for specimens, looked like an undertaker's man reduced to stone-breaking. This indifference to appearance has been the cause of innumerable humiliations to him, all which he has borne with an admirable philosophy. Upon one occasion, when seated on a heap of stones by the wayside, engaged in his professional avocations, a benevolent female gave him a shilling, which he accepted with much gratitude and politeness. Later in the day, she met the professor at a dinner-party which was given in his honour, and confided to him that she was certain that she had somewhere seen his face before, but in what sparkling throng, or under what circumstances of social splendour, she was unable to recollect. 'You saw me this very morning, madam, and gave me a shilling, and here it is.' On another occasion, when weary with manual labour, and heavy with deposits of the Wealden Formation, he entered a humble village inn, and called for refreshment, the landlady—good creature—refused to take his money, because, she said, it was easy to perceive that the poor old wayfarer had seen better days.

There was not above forty years in reality between the ages of the professor and Tootawun, but so different were they to look at, that the one might have been dug out of the lowest Palæozoic, and the other taken from the upper crust of New Bond Street. Tootawun, as I believe, had never been up so early before (it being not yet nine o'clock), but so far from grumbling at the inconvenience, he seemed to enjoy the novelty of the situation, making many eulogistic remarks upon the aspect and temperature of nature, and patronising the works of Providence in a manner that drew smiles to the face of the Sage. Having dismissed our conveyance at a certain spot where it was to await our

return, the professor undertook to conduct us across the fields to the sea-side. For this purpose, he unrolling a series of maps which he carried across his shoulders, and began to investigate our position after the manner of a general about to open a campaign. The sheets were spread out upon the field, so as to cover a considerable portion of it; and myself and Tootawun, his *aides-de-camp*, spread ourselves out on the sheets, and reported our observations to our chief. The professor would have been perfectly at home three or four thousand feet beneath where we were standing; he could have led us anywhere in a vertical direction, with the most unerring instinct; from the most Recent stratification down to the lower Cambrian, he could have found his way as easily as down stairs; but the surface of the earth, or at least the direction of its roads, was just the thing he knew nothing whatever about. Now the maps were geological maps, where the superficial information essential to our horizontal movement was wanting, and we all disagreed about which was the proper road to take. Tootawun volunteered to back his own opinion, if we would give him small odds, and I humbly suggested that his umbrella should be made use of in digging down to the Barton clay, whose 'dip' having been discovered by Sandstone, our bearing could be regulated accordingly. The professor, however, declined both offers; his capacious mind had already grappled with the difficulty, and conquered it. 'I see a boy in yonder field,' said he, 'let us ask him.'

This boy informed us that the nearest way to the sea-shore was about a mile and a quarter, by which (although it was totally false) I do not believe that he intended to deceive us. In this part of Hampshire it is usual to describe all localities as being about a mile and quarter distant, without reference to the actual amount of space that may intervene. After we had walked about twice this distance, we came upon the edge of a perpendicular cliff, down which, I suppose, was the 'nearest way,' about which our informant spoke. Immediately below this were a number of ladies bathing.

'My dear professor,' inquired I, 'is that the Nummulite family?' Having adjusted his field-glasses with great care, Professor Sandstone took a prolonged view at the ocean, and regretting that we were unable to descend at that particular spot, where, said he, there were several very interesting objects, he led the way down a jagged path, bordered by gorse and honeysuckle, to the sparkling but lonely sands. Before us, across the scarcely moving sea, unspotted by a single tardy sail, stood up the Needles and the dazzling cliffs of the Fair Island. Headlands to left and right shut us out from all other land. There was not a sound to be heard save the languid lap of the wave, and the 'peck, peck, peck' of the philosopher's hammer, who was already hard at work on the crumbling cliff.

'He goes at it like a navvy at a barrow, don't he?' said Tootawun, lighting his third cigar, 'except that he doesn't moisten his hands first.'

'Nay, if it was a barrow,' said I, 'he would be ten times as enthusiastic; for wherever old bones are concerned, he is a perfect ghoul.'

'Come here, you young fellows,' cried the subject of this panegyric, while I yet spoke; 'what think you of this, my friends, for a first find?' He held aloft a something which I regarded reverently, while maintaining the discreetest silence.

'Why, it's only an oyster-shell with lumps upon it, professor,' said Tootawun audaciously; 'we often get em so for supper in the Haymarket.'

'Oyster-shell!' cried Sandstone with indignation—'oyster fiddlestick! It is a most exquisite specimen of the *Crassatella sulcata*, sir, and quite perfect.'

'Exquisite indeed!' cried I. 'Let me wash it carefully in the sea, and give it a polish up for you with my pocket-handkerchief.'

I shall never forget the look of withering scorn with which Sandstone received this courteous suggestion. He could not have treated a friendly offer to go snacks with him in the proceeds of a felony with greater contempt; and I am quite sure that his opinion of me fell several degrees lower than it would have done had the shell been a little baby, and I had proposed infanticide.

'What!' cried he severely, 'wash my *Crassatella*! spoil my fossil! An ignorance of this kind, young gentleman, is next kin to crime.'

In atonement for all this, myself with the lent hammer, and Tootawun with his umbrella, set resolutely to work upon the cliff, and really did good service. Volutes in plenty and of many kinds rewarded our exertions, which were afterwards recompensed over again by the smiles of the professor. The digging out of these antediluvian wonders was, at least, as interesting as gathering shells on the sea-shore, and without any accompanying backache, since we had not to stoop for them. A fine fossil jutting out from its surrounding clay, which was to Sandstone more than a diamond set in gold, became also to us an object of considerable desire. To excavate it unbroken, and bear it to the kindly man of science, to receive its high-sounding title, made each of us as proud as Garter King at Arms, and was, I should imagine, a great deal better fun than his work. Sometimes our master would meet us with a gruff 'Recent,' and a significant glance at the cliff-top, by which we understood that the treasure we had picked up of ten thousand years old or so, as we supposed, had tumbled down from the ploughed field above, within the fortnight—but on the whole we gave him great satisfaction. The Eocene formation began to be gradually familiar to us, and the discovery of shark's teeth to be a matter of course. The more delicate shell-specimens were carefully wrapped in paper, and placed in the band round the professor's wide-awake, like leaden saints in the bonnet of a devotee; the next valuable were put in his pockets, and among them a *terebellum convolutum*, which got in his fob and broke his watch; and the rest reposed in the canvas bag, which, upon Tootawun and I volunteering to bear it by turns, Sandstone filled to the throat, without that nice regard to exclusive selection which had characterised him when he carried it himself. Although the professor's watch was stopped by the *terebellum*, the inward monitor that that gentleman possessed, in common with all creatures of the post-tertiary period, informed him at last that it was luncheon-time. A few dozen of the common mollusc (and an oyster-knife) would, long before this, have been hailed by at least two of the party with greater enthusiasm than a pterodactyl. Smugglers we should have welcomed with total disregard for law, had they brought a cargo; but, on the contrary, there was nothing to be seen but a Preventive Station, and up to this there was no sort of road. The cliffs were perpendicular, and even if they had been at an angle, we could not have ascended them, laden as we were with 'all creation'—or at least with a considerable portion of it. We had already begun to look at the jelly-fishes with something more than curiosity, when Tootawun discovered a path up which it is possible for the Human to proceed upon all-fours. The toil was excessive, and we had to pass through many varieties of strata between the yielding Barton clay and *terra firmer*. At last we arrived at the 'look-out' station, the flag-staff, and the almshouse-looking block of buildings which constitute the ordinary coast-guard colony; the inhabitants crowded around us as though we had been shipwrecked mariners, and expressed their frankest admiration at the agility which had brought us from the shore. As for lunch, however, that was as far off as ever (in Hampshire), the nearest inn being at the usual distance of a mile and a quarter. This intelligence damped us,

with reason, worse than far more depressing information would have done in another county. We started in a melancholy string, the professor leading, whose curiously decorated appearance, and the manner in which we had arrived upon the cliff-top, had led the Preventive public to conceive him to be a professional acrobat. A performance of an athletic character was evidently expected from us as soon as we should arrive at the village, and in that hope we were accompanied by several infantine members of the coast-guard.

To those who are acquainted with Professor Sandstone, it is unnecessary to remark that he soon distanced us, and only by the juvenile crowd around the entrance did we learn to which of the two humble inns the place afforded he had given his patronage. We found him contentedly examining his treasures in a small back-room, where the landlady had left him to attend upon some more important pedler-folks. The appearance of the magnificent though toilworn Tootawun instantly changed matters for the better, and with profuse apologies we were ushered into a more convenient apartment. The cheese and onions which had been promised to Sandstone were exchanged for poached-eggs and apple-pie, and some of the very hardest beer which I ever drank in my life, announced that our exalted condition was recognised.

Tootawun's boots, however, so pinched him (a small price indeed to pay for such social superiority), that the thought of walking further became an element of discomfort to his repast, in addition to the two-pronged steel fork which imparted such a lively tonic to his eggs. He inquired, therefore, not without anxiety, of our hostess, how far distant was the spot where we had arranged that our vehicle should meet us.

'Well, sir, it is about a mile and a quarter,' said the woman; at which reply I thought that Tootawun and I would have lost a delightful companion, and geology a pillar. If it had not been for patting on the back, I believe the professor would have verily expired with laughter. It was so very strange to the man of science to find himself among a people with whom 'a mile and a quarter' was the unit of measure.

'Is there any sort of trap to be got about here, my dear good woman?' inquired Tootawun with a groan.

'No,' answered the professor stoutly; 'there is nothing of that description. All is aqueous and fossiliferous.'

'I beg your parding, sir,' observed the landlady, with a look of quiet scorn at the mad old gentleman; 'but considering that you be a stranger here, and that I have lived in this village, girl and woman, for this fifty years, I will make bold to say that you are wrong. Pochaisses and siehlike we may *not* possess, neither lord-mayors' coaches [this last with intense bitterness], but traps we have, both butchers' and likewise bakers', and the butcher is a-drinking in the kitchen at this present speaking.'

I shall never forget that butcher. He was not only oily, but one of the most insinuating persons I ever saw; if he had lived anywhere else—in a less out-of-the-way and inaccessible locality—his talents could not fail to have been appreciated. He would probably have been made a bishop. Tootawun justly remarked, that he reminded one immensely of what Cardinal Wolsey must have been in his youth. He comprehended us and the situation at a glance. 'She don't know nothing,' observed he of the landlady, with evident reference to her misconception of the professor; 'she's just a simple body. My cart is very much at your service, such as it is; but he'll jolt yer, bless yer. He ain't used to carrying gentlefolks, only joints and such like.'

'My dear sir,' exclaimed Tootawun, 'it will be charming.'

'Well, sir, it ain't springy, you see, and that's a fact; and you must sit well back in him. But if the—the *Doctor*—will come for'ard with me, upon the shafts, and you two other gents—but there you shall see for yourselves.'

We did see for ourselves, and it was a very curious sight. The butcher was seated on the extreme north-eastern edge of the vehicle, whereby the whole thing seemed to be balanced pretty well; but whoever entered it after that became a disturbing force. I took my seat upon a very narrow board, which had been inserted for our accommodation in the extreme rear, and the cart immediately tilted up (it was *not* a tilt cart), so that I thought the little pony would have been carried clean off his legs backwards. The professor, with his load of stones, took the north-west corner, and restored the balance; and then came Tootawun, who is six-feet-four, and sat down by me, with the following results: The cart flew up, till the front was at an angle of about 45 degrees, and we were within six inches of the ground; the pony disappeared from view altogether, but the shafts came into fine relief, so that it was impossible to avoid perceiving that one was cracked, and the other had received a compound comminuted fracture, very insecurely held together by a piece of twine; and under these circumstances, the butcher exclaimed it was All Right, and off we dashed at a handgallop.

For a few moments, nobody broke silence; the professor (who is a clergyman) was, I hope, engaged in serious reflection. Tootawun's lips moved, and I heard him mutter, 'Lombard Street to a China orange,' which is his customary phrase for very long odds, and was evidently expressive of his opinion of what little chance there was of our coming out of that cart alive. As for myself, terror froze my utterance. In addition to the perils already mentioned, I perceived, as I bent forward with my forehead touching the butcher's blue back (in a vain attempt to restore an equilibrium), that the bottom of the cart was in fissures; here a plank and here a space alternately; there was also a grinding noise in connection with the axle, which made it not improbable that the wheel-work would very soon come to pieces, and even perhaps burst out into a flame.

Bump, whir, rattle—bump, bump, whir! and whenever that dreadful whip was smacked, a combination of shocks such as the rack itself could not have produced without the assistance of an electrifying-machine. When we were going downhill, it was rather better for us behind, for though both the professor and the butcher joined us, leaning back as far as they could, with their heads in our laps, and the professor was irritable about the safety of the precious fossils in his hat, and the butcher's head was greasy, still we could sit up, and see where we were going to; but when ascending an elevation, our miseries were greatly intensified, our destruction (by means of the pony coming over upon us the wrong way up) being much more imminent, and nothing to distract our attention except the starless sky. It was no use taking hold of the sides of the cart, for they were slippery beyond description, with the fat of ten thousand animals, dead and alive, which had travelled in that fatal vehicle; and as for taking a grip of the butcher, you might as well have tried to steady yourself by a pillar of quicksilver, or a bundle of eels. He shone from the collar of his coat to as far as I could see, like Warren's blacking—only he was blue. I am a tender-hearted man, and have always pitied calves in a cart; but until I had ridden after their fashion myself, I had no idea what they really suffer. Some precaution is, however, taken for their security which was omitted in our case. 'I wish,' groaned Tootawun, on an occasion when we were both jerked up a foot or two from our narrow board, 'I wish that we had a net over us, like the calves.'

At last it happened.

We were 'making play,' as our driver, by a frightful misnomer, chose to term it, down a short but sharp descent, when with a shock that was not much more terrible than many which had preceded it, the whole concern came to pieces. The shaft snapped, the spoke flew out, the bottom fell through, and the wonderful trap lay scattered about like a box of lucifer-matches with the top off. Only the butcher still sat on the north-eastern angle of his late vehicle, like a shipwrecked captain clinging to a solitary spar of his beloved vessel.

'Never mind,' said he, soliloquising cheerfully, 'I was going to have a new one before Christmas. I trust, sir,' said he, turning to Sandstone, who was semi-prostrate, as we all were in the road, 'that there is nothing broke?'

'My *Typhis pungens* is slightly fractured,' replied the professor, examining that preciously perfect shell with much concern; 'but I am thankful to say that I have got another at home.'

'Well, there is no more riding in that cart, at all events,' exclaimed Tootawun with a malicious triumph, that proclaimed him uninjured.

As for myself, I was slightly bruised, but had suffered already far more seriously from the excessively narrow board I had been sitting on, which was also jagged—like a saw.

'And how much do you charge, butcher, for the ride and the—the curricula?'

We were not cast in exorbitant damages, and we paid them cheerfully, parting with our late driver on the best of terms. The last thing he did was to shew us the road, which we once more pursued as pedestrians, the offer of the pony 'to ride and tie' being declined with thanks; and the last thing he said was to tell us how far we had yet to go.

'Well,' said he, smoothing his smooth hair, and with the air of a man who is about to make an original and thoughtful observation, 'I should think it might be a mile and a quarter.'

HEALTH.

WE all love life; even the most inveterate of grumblers will give ample proof, on occasion, that the instinct of self-preservation is still active within them. There is a profound truth embodied in the Greek fable of that poor wretch who called for Death to end his woes, and was reconciled to life by the sudden apparition of the King of Terrors. It is not every one who invokes the aid of the grisly consoler, to whom it is allowed to draw back and renounce the connection; for rash and desperate mortals, in their impatience of earthly trouble, sometimes summon Death by such potent talismans of poison, drowning waves, or gash-inflicting steel, that no change of mind can be permitted. And yet how often must some self-murderer, as life ebbed, and the fatal drug took firmer hold of the heart's citadel, as the last drops trickled from the exhausted veins, or as the black waters closed overhead, have felt a yearning to undo the foolish deed, and to live on. Life is valuable for its own sake; it has been clung to with unsurpassed tenacity by those whose existence was joyless enough—the slave at the galleys, the prisoner in the dungeon, the captive among barbarians. Even in the bare fact of living, there is a charm: the most vegetative form of life is fondly clung to by every sentient being. Under these circumstances, it might have been supposed that Health, which is but a comprehensive name for the normal conditions under which alone life can be fully enjoyed or made useful, would have been valued as it deserves. Surely, it might be thought, mankind must have learned the natural laws which concern themselves most nearly, ages ago; bygone generations must have handed down golden precepts for the preservation of health: the accumulated

wisdom of ages must have heaped up a treasury of precious facts, and a sound mind in a sound body must be the most familiar of blessings.

Such an idea, however, is Utopian in the highest degree. Great and indisputable as the sum of the world's progress has been, the study of health, as a science, is one of the fire-new features of our own century. There have always been a few men wiser than their fellows, who aimed at great reforms in the physical as in the moral world, and imminent peril or great annoyance has sometimes forced improvement upon the rulers of a nation. Thus, the Plague was of old time a great teacher; to its stern schooling we owe the gigantic drainage-system of Rome, which served as a model to all who took pattern by the imperial city, the precaution of quarantine, and such other sanitary laws as have striven from age to age to curb the neglect and selfishness of short-sighted man. It is an old story now how the Greeks lay before Troy in their huge slovenly camp, and how the sun shone upon the leaguer, and bred a pestilence there. The same thing happens now where masses of human beings congregate without wholesome discipline to guide them. Our Boards do not tell the tale so gracefully as Homer told it: their reports are dry and dull compared with his glowing account of the crowds that fell beneath the arrow sunbeams from Apollo's quiver, of the wrath of Smintheus, and the superstitious reasons for that wrath; but the phenomena are the same. This liability to wholesale and sudden death—a death which no valour could avert, and which smote the hero as remorselessly as the slave that waited on him—was the peculiar scourge of armies.

But even civil life was no guarantee against the punishments that attend all violations of natural laws. First in the order of the great plagues of which any historical record is preserved comes the Plague of Egypt, which slew its tens of thousands no less than fifteen centuries before the commencement of the Christian era. This was not so destructive as some of its hideous successors, as the Black Death of 1345 A. D., or as some of the pests of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. But the grim guests that came at irregular intervals to decimate mankind had certain remarkable traits in common, and were usually preceded by portents from which wise observers might have deduced a warning. We find that almost all countries about to be swept by the besom of the Plague have experienced some at least of those visitations which preceded the death of the first-born of Egypt. Famine is the true nurse and precursor of epidemics, but not famine alone. When the cattle are sickly, and the blight is on the corn and fruit trees—when myriads of insects fill the air with the buzzing life that bodes no good to the higher races in creation—when birds are dead or silent, and the air is heavy and thick with unwholesome haze—when food is scarce and springs fail, there is much reason to fear that some formidable epidemic is at hand. Extraordinarily hot summers and very cold winters have been generally the heralds of pestilence, especially in ancient times, when the slightest severity of temperature tended to produce dearth, and thus to pave the way for Plague. Usually, too, the Destroyer does not come without sending forward a gaunt vanguard of fevers and other ailments, whose unusual virulence bears token that evil influences are abroad, and should call on us to be up and doing, ere the storm bursts. The old Plague—the Spotted Fever—which appeared in various forms and at brief intervals, appears now to be worn out. If it lingers at all, it hides among the rags and squalor of some of the Moorish towns that are built on the ruins of the ancient Pentapolis. In honour of the Plague, we still maintain our quarantine rules and restrictions, but the devouring old dragon is feeble and toothless, and almost a fossil foe. Whence Plague came, was merely matter of conjecture and assertion;

it did not admit of positive proof. Egypt long lay under the stigma of having warmed this fell snake in her bosom; but Egypt passes on the blame, up the Nile, to Ethiopia; and Ethiopia in turn accuses Abyssinia, or the Libyan Desert, or the unknown lands of equatorial Africa, or even Syria itself. The parentage is bandied to and fro, and none will claim the ugly offspring. Be that as it may, Plague had a long and terrible reign over some of the fairest regions in the world. It swept Europe and Asia with fearful impartiality, sometimes culling a few victims here and there, sometimes cutting down the human harvest like an impatient reaper, and now and then emptying a city, as in the case of Naples and Brussels, of three-fourths of its inhabitants. Its visits were most irregular; in the annals of its coming, a great gap occurs. From 590 A. D. to 1345 A. D., the pest seemed to sleep. Other fevers and epidemics appeared, and did much harm, but not Plague. Then it reappeared, like a dead and cold volcano bursting into fiery vigour, after slumbering for seven hundred and fifty years. The physicians of King Edward III. were at their wits' end when called upon to battle with a disease which had last appeared when England was a heathen and barbarous land, and of whose symptoms no proper register had been preserved.

It was not until the Printing Press and the Reformation, throwing as they did the minds of all thoughtful men into a ferment of intellectual activity, that physic did much for mankind. Even then, the Plague, which severed the fondest ties of blood and affection, was only too apt to drive the doctors to ignominious flight. So late as the Great Plague of London—not yet two hundred years ago—most of the grave and dignified men of healing, with their gold-headed canes, pounce and pomander boxes, black velvet coats, and prodigious periwigs, turned their backs to the enemy, and headed the emigration to green meadows and pure air. By this time, however, a doctor had become more of a physician, and less of a would-be conjurer or mouthpiece for professional jargon. There were some tolerable surgeons in the latter half of the seventeenth century, horribly as the medical attendants of Charles II. chose to torment the poor failing king in his last hours. Leprosy, for instance, once endemic in the most civilised countries, was rooted out by improved treatment, mightily aided by better food and increased comfort and cleanliness. We have never seen the Plague in England since that dreadful holocaust of 1665, when the metropolis had to bury what Defoe, with excusable exaggeration, described as a hundred thousand victims. Fifty-five years later, a bale of Alexandrian goods, as the story goes, brought into the doomed city of Marseille the last pest of this kind which France has known. The ebbing wave still ravaged the Levant for a time, but with feebleness, and gradually became a tradition. Small-pox was nearly as fatal, and spread almost as much alarm during the last two centuries, as the true Plague had done. Not only death in this case, but disfigurement, had to be feared; and until Jenner earned the gratitude of a world by publishing a counter-charm, Western Europe suffered as the aborigines of America have suffered at a later date. Small-pox, too, struck the young with especial selection; it took the petted heir from his lace-festooned cradle; it fastened on the child at the cottage door; it blighted the village beauty; and it broke the hopes and the life of the high-born lady as she gazed upon her mirror. Many old novels told how the heroine, the bride-elect, perhaps, sickened of this complaint when on the very threshold of happiness. Mantua-makers and milliners had been at work, perhaps; the lawyers had drawn the settlements, the feast was prepared, and even the wreath of orange-blossoms twined for the fair brow of the bride, when in stalked this hateful intruder to forbid the bans. Poor Clorinda! Poor Sacharissa! what is to befall thee, now thou art once stricken,

and down on that couch of pain, in the darkened room, with thy sobbing mother sitting patient at the bedside, and thy frightened sisters huddled away? Better die, so thou deemest, poor little half-taught girl of the seventeenth century—better die, and be wrapped in thy maiden shroud, and so laid under the turf, than live to be jilted, to see Eugenio's look of aversion at thy scarred face, and to pine and wither as an ugly, unloved creature! Many did die, the doctors and nurses aiding the disorder, as far as mountainous bedclothes, blazing fires, and scalding drinks could do so, until a new and better system prevailed, and vaccination conjured away the spectre from our hearths and homes.

Other epidemics, such as the falling sickness, had come in, in elder times, rioted for awhile, and then subsided like a fire that burns out for lack of fuel; and when small-pox was fairly conquered, and Europe breathed in peace, a new invader appeared. His pedigree we know perfectly well; we trace his birthplace in the swamps of Upper Ganges, we are aware how he fleshed his first fury among the millions of Hindus, in that stronghold of India which he never leaves, and where, when all the rest of the world is at rest, he still smites native and foreigner. But great was the terror of Christendom, when, less than thirty years back, the ghastly march of the Asiatic Cholera began for the first time to press upon the western world. We may be very thankful that the advance of this new destroyer took place in an age when science was bold and active, when society was rich, enlightenment comparatively general, and material comfort widely diffused. Had the Cholera swooped down upon the squalid cities, the famine-struck and superstitious populations, and the ignorant and incapable doctors of the dark ages, few indeed would have escaped to tell the tale. We live better and more cleanly than the people of elder days; our food is wholesomer, our clothing is better, our dwellings are better; we have neither the dearths nor the panics of the middle ages. Not only are our physicians a hundredfold better than the old prattlers about Galen and Hermes, but there is a courageous devoted spirit among us which insures due nursing to the sick. This was first shewn at Marseille, in 1720, when the 'good bishop' that Pope sings of, with brave Chevalier Rose, and a generous little band of martyrs, stayed to fight the Plague, and save lives at the risk of their own. It was an ugly foe they had to contend with. The gangs of galley-slaves who buried the dead perished so fast, that even they refused to be driven at the sword's point to the cart and the pits. 'Kill us!' they cried in their reckless despair; 'we will not do that work any more.' But the little troop of volunteers bore the dead to the grave, tended the living, and kept up such stout hearts that few, if any of them, succumbed to the assaults of the viewless foe. Compare this Marseille plague with the plague of Florence in the fourteenth century, when mothers abandoned their children, husbands their wives, children their parents; when selfish fear overcame gratitude, attachment, duty, even instinct itself. But the peaceful heroes of 1720 were doubly in the right; the true way to baffle disease is not to quail before it; it is seldom that a person utterly fearless, and active in ministering to others, droops beneath the touch of plague or cholera; the venomous arrows glance off harmless from the stout heart and the good conscience. But fear attracts the destroyer as with an electric sympathy, and the taint has been known to fix itself upon those who manifested unworthy tremors, even when no contagion seemed imminent.

There is one more disease, and perhaps one only, which merits the name of plague—the yellow fever. This complaint is more local than the other members of its class. It is peculiar to the New World, and to certain latitudes and localities. So well is

this known, and so completely is the partial distribution of the disorder ascertained, that a ship on the West Indian station can often check the ravages of the fever by standing out to sea. Some islands are wholly free from yellow fever, while others, such as Jamaica, Antigua, and Tobago, are never without its presence. There is one well-known village in Mexico, situated among the marshes of the Atlantic coast, where newly arrived strangers—French, English, or Yankee clerks in the mercantile houses of Vera Cruz—are in the habit of repairing, that they may obtain a touch of the 'seasoning fever.' This is, in fact, a rude process of inoculation, akin to that which Lady Mary Wortley Montagu introduced in cases of small-pox. The patient is careful to make the experiment in spring, when the 'vomitito prieto' is comparatively weak and gentle, medical skill and a youthful constitution soon conquer the poison, and henceforth the new-comer is looked on as a man fever-proof, and fit to reside on that pestiferous coast during the deadly heats of summer, and the sickening sultriness of autumn. When the fever strikes hard and home, it is no easy task to save a patient; strong measures quickly taken, answer best; but in this case, as in most others, prevention is better than cure. All considerable elevations, as of the Blue Mountains in Jamaica, or the *tierra templada* of Mexico, are exempt from yellow fever. Even a high wall often bars out the pest, which can more easily crawl up a slope than overleap a perpendicular barrier. This proves that the miasma is of the same type as the malaria of the Roman plains, which is almost always checked by a wall, and which abounds in an inverse ratio to population and comfort. It matters little whether we incline to the zymotic or the sporadic theory; be the blight a cloud of insects or of fungi, a blight there is, sometimes palpable to the eye, but which only settles where its seeds can find a soil prepared for them. This is only too easy to find, in the quarters where poverty dwells, amid evil smells and sights, with impure air and water, crowded dwellings, and gaunt want. All plagues are most destructive among the poor.

After all, much as pestilence excites the fears and impresses the imagination, it does not make a great show in modern bills of mortality, when compared with the constant but gradual action of familiar maladies which frighten no one. Pulmonary complaints, in one shape or other, thin the world's census more than the rest of the dire sisterhood of ills. Consumption, hackneyed word! with bronchitis and diphtheria, carry death into a hundred thousand households, for every case of Asiatic cholera. In the North, up in bleak Scandinavia and frigid Russia, sharp and sudden inflammations do the work which in more temperate regions belongs to phthisis. Absolute health is the rarest of blessings; we may prove this by turning any week to the instructive columns of the Registrar-general's returns. How few are the cases there recorded in which the cause of death is 'natural decay;' and yet we ought all to die of natural decay. Every fatal termination to a disease is abnormal and out of the proper course of things, just as the disease itself is a misfortune; and yet how few of us hope to see out our fourscore years, like Gaffer Gray there, and end, as he will do, by the painless wearing out of the whole machine. No; we are not for the most part destined to attain so patriarchal a term, certainly not to succumb so gently and calmly, like a tired child falling asleep after the long, long sports of the summer holiday. The preservation of health is not an easy thing. We are not all, to be sure, members of unwholesome trades—water-gilders, whose veins are surcharged with mercury; painters, sickening under the poison of white-lead and arsenic; tailors, steel-grinders, or men who go down in diving-bells. But neither are we so many Cornaros,

to devote life to the art of living; to weigh out our rations of food and drink like a miser weighing gold; and to tremble when a careless motion makes the scales incline unduly. We cannot all reside in a bracing air, or inhale the sea-breeze at will, or pick and choose with reference to the occupation we will pursue, the place of our abode, or even our diet. It is wonderful how little choice most persons, nominally free, possess with respect to their particular calling or dwelling-place. When poor little Griggles, fresh from Eton, teased his affectionate parents into procuring his commission in her Majesty's Hundred and Ninth, how little did he know what was in store for him? He was bewitched by the scarlet and gold lace, the pomp, pride, and circumstance of war, or rather of peace and garrison-life, and thought the profession of arms a perpetual round of enjoyment. Three voyages in crowded transports, two dreary banishments to far-away and half-fledged colonies, and an inglorious campaign against sun and savages, have taught Griggles a lesson. He does his duty like a man, but the bloom has been roughly rubbed from his gay hopes, and he regrets his selection.

As with Griggles, so with others. Why must young Brushett become a house-painter, of all trades in the world, with the pitiable spectacle of his bowed and crippled father before his eyes—his father, who was a painter before him, and dabbled in poisonous minerals till he could climb ladder no more? And pale, hectic-cheeked Mr Darlingboy, why, in the name of common sense, did he get ordained, and take that dreadful curacy of St Starveling, where the work would require a man with the lungs of a Stentor, the legs of a Barclay, and the patience of Job? We cannot always pick our walk in life; but we can, for the most part, adhere to some plain rules, take some simple precautions, guard a little against sickness and suffering. Downright health, 'rude' health, as medical authorities somewhat disparagingly call it, cannot, under existing circumstances, be the lot of all, but most of us might be greatly the better for exercise, prudence, and regimen.

The work of improvement has gone on from age to age not always consciously, but with tolerable certainty. We cannot tell with accuracy what was the term of average human life in the dark ages; but the mortality of the British nation at large has dwindled to little more than half what it was when the Stuarts reigned over us. Population has increased as wealth has doubled and quadrupled; and every decade has seen fewer funerals, in proportion to the numbers of the living, and heard more and more merry bells ring out for wedding and christening. Britain is now the healthiest country—to judge by tabular statements—in all Europe, and it bids fair to make further wholesome progress in the same direction. Not only have we less death among us than of old, but we have less of unrelieved sickness, deformity, and lifelong pain, than the island used to contain within its bounds. There is a sentimental belief that the human race has been constantly degenerating, and that we are puny diminutives of our tremendous progenitors. There is so little proof of this extant, that the old suits of armour which are preserved are, for the most part, too tight a fit for our life-guardsmen, and even for persons of much slighter thumbs. The old weapons are not too heavy for our hands. As for the big bones of those long-buried champions which we sometimes dig from the cyst, where they lie beneath the green barrow on the downs, those huge remains by no means prove that the ordinary stature of the race was so Titanic. There lies the giant, the mighty champion, the large-limbed king of men; we look on his massive skeleton with a kind of awe. Even the navvies hold their breath, and gaze respectfully on the vast framework of the long dead hero—Dane, Briton, Saxon—who measured seven, perhaps eight feet from sole to

crown. But it was just because he was taller, bigger, and more dreadful in fight than any one else in his tribe, that this man was king. See, he has a royal tomb to himself. The commonalty do not lie here; their middle-sized skeletons were not thought worthy of a barrow. Much has been done, but more remains, before disease can be reduced to a minimum—before preventable accidents can be rendered rare—before health can become the rule rather than the exception. It is a hopeful sign for the future that such zeal and heedfulness are shewn on behalf of a public often quiescent and thoughtless, on the subjects of good drainage, good water, and dwellings not necessarily full of tainted air and carbonic acid gas. There are sanitary reformers as ardent in their own line as religious reformers have been in theirs; they struggle on, thwarted here, helped there, elbowing a hundred corporated selfishnesses, battling with vested interests, and in mortal combat with prejudices from morning till night. But they deserve laurels as much as warriors do, for they are fighting to rescue the helpless and the feeble, of this and future generations, from the baleful jaws of the devouring dragon, Death. We may well hope that a day will dawn, in the good time coming, when Health will be the most abundant, as it is now among the scarcest, of man's earthly blessings.

SOMETHING OF ITALY.

PADUA, THE LAKES, THE SPLUGEN.

In returning from Venice we took the opportunity of stopping a day at Padua, an ancient city noted for its university, but still more noted for its saint, to whose shrine I had a fancy to make a pilgrimage. This was not difficult to do, for Padua is a station on the line of railway, and from the hôtel—the worst and dearest we found in Italy—we had only to walk across the way to the church, which forms the centre of attraction in the town. A month previously, when visiting the church of Ara Celi in Rome, I had been stimulated to know something of the renowned Sant' Antonia di Padova, who, dying in 1231, left behind him such a high reputation for miracle-working, that till this day he is invoked for succour in cases of extreme danger to life and limb.

The church of *Il Santo*, as it is called, is a large building of brick, far from elegant in appearance, and with several spires and cupolas, which give it a somewhat eastern character. The interior, which has numerous monuments of distinguished personages, differs little from churches of its age and character. There are several altars, but that which is specially dedicated to the saint, occupying the northern transept, and considerably elevated, is decorated with all that art can accomplish as regards sculpture, gilding, and miscellaneous ornament, while, to give additional effect, numerous lamps are kept constantly burning before it.

In front of this superb structure, worshippers are seen on their knees in silent devotion, and behind it others, more demonstrative, are spreading their hands and pressing their foreheads on the gray marble sarcophagus which sustains the general fabric. On the walls around, as well as on the two ends of the altar, there hang a large number of framed sketches in oil or water colours, illustrative of the miraculous interposition of the saint. The special function of St Anthony of Padua appears to be the saving of persons from being killed by some sudden catastrophe, such as the overturning of carriages, the running

away of horses, the upsetting of boats, and the falling over precipices; it would even seem he is found available in the case of railway accidents, a circumstance which is gratifying, in these days, to feel. Some of the sketches referred to recent occurrences. One represented a person prostrate with the wheel of a wagon about to crush him to death; but St Anthony is seen looking down benignantly from the clouds, and may be presumed to have averted the calamity, for the picture bears the inscription, 'Per Grazia Ricevuto, 3 Oct. 1858.' In the treasury of the church, a highly decorated apartment behind the choir, certain relics of *Il Santo* are carefully preserved. The most precious is his tongue, which, enshrined in a case of gold and jewels, is shewn publicly at his annual festa, when immense crowds attend from the country around.

Outside the church we found several stalls for the sale of pewter medals, pictures, and histories of the life and miracles of the saint. I could not but look with some degree of curiosity on a species of chap-books such as constituted the popular literature in England three hundred and odd years ago. I bought several of these cheap histories, which are not less amusing as narratives than for their coarse and grotesque prints, illustrative of the miracles wrought by the grand Thaumaturgist—as, for example, his preaching to the fishes, which he called to the surface of the sea to listen to his discourse; his causing a mule to kneel down in the street in adoration of the host; and his drawing an answer from a new-born infant as to who was its father! These and other stories of the miracles effected by St Anthony of Padua are told with perfect gravity; and the fact of such being in popular request, affords one a by no means pleasing insight into the intelligence among the humbler classes in this part of Italy.

The university of Padua, which we had the satisfaction of seeing, derives some celebrity from the circumstance of Galileo having been one of its professors; and though greatly fallen off in point of attendance, is said to have still a high reputation. Entertaining no doubt as to its ancient and modern renown, we may be excused for lamenting that it should have done so little to irrigate the popular mind with some rills of general knowledge. As just seen, numbers of people within a hundred yards of its venerable class-rooms, are in the lowest depths of ignorance. Another incongruity fell unexpectedly under notice. In the course of a ramble, we entered the church of Santa Giustina, a large and handsome basilica with side-aisles, and to our surprise found it full of military stores. Sacks of flour, billets of wood, and other materials were piled high on the floor from end to end of the building, in offensive contrast with the fine paintings and sculptures at the several altars. The use of the church for religious purposes was for the time at an end, and that under Austrian authority! The French incurred abuse for having converted the adjoining monastery into a barrack, a mild form of outrage in comparison with this odious act of desecration.

There was nothing to invite a protracted stay in this in all respects antiquated town. The old buildings along its narrow streets, supported by pillars and arches to form arcades for foot-passengers, form the leading feature of its architecture, and impart a gloomy aspect to the place. Resuming the train, we proceeded to conclude our excursion by a visit to those lakes in the north of Italy—Maggiore, Lugano, and Como, which few tourists return across the Alps without seeing. As the lakes are separated only by necks of land a few miles wide, for which carriages can be obtained on the spot, they may be taken conveniently in a group, and it rests with excursionists

* *Vita del Gran Thaumaturgo Sant' Antonia di Padova, estratta dall' Ab. de Azavedo da Vincenzo Follolina. Venezia, 1857.*

whether to begin with Como or Maggiore; their choice being probably governed by the route they purpose afterwards to pursue. We preferred to commence with Maggiore, as we intended to cross the Alps by the Splügen, the grandest pass into Switzerland in point of rugged scenery; but comparatively few adopt this somewhat circuitous route home, and prefer beginning with Como, in order to cross the mountains by St Gothard or the Simplon from Maggiore. There is now a railway from Milan to Como, and also to Arona on Maggiore, so that there is no difficulty whatever in getting to the scenery of these beautiful sub-alpine lakes. In various quarters there are first-rate hôtels, more particularly at Arona, Lugano, and Bellagio; and to complete the amenities of travelling, on each lake there are good steamers, which touch at a considerable number of places in their voyages to and fro.

Passing through Milan, we had the rail to Arona, a small but thriving town commanding a fine view of the opposite shore of Lake Maggiore, and of the castle of Angera. But the views are fine on all sides; the green hills being well clothed with woods—hazel, olive, and mulberry—and studded with picturesque chalets. Handsome villas are springing up in the neighbourhood of this place, and in all quarters there is an air of activity which is in striking contrast to what we had lately seen in Venetia. Formerly, the eastern side of the lake belonged to Austria, and tourists in passing from place to place had some trouble about luggage and passports, but now all that portion of Maggiore which does not pertain to Switzerland is included in the kingdom of Italy, and consequently there is no interruption. Thanks to Napoleon, the road across the Simplon was carried along the western shore of the lake in communication with Milan. Along this road, we took a conveyance from Arona to a village about eight miles distant, with the design of visiting Isola Bella, one of the Borromean isles, whence we intended to be carried forward by the steamer which would pass a few hours afterwards.

The Borromean Isles, taking their name from a family of local distinction, are three in number—Isola Bella, Isola Piscatore, and Isola Madre, all of small extent. The only one of any note is Isola Bella—the Beautiful Island—so called from no natural beauty, but from the manner in which it is artificially decorated and rendered attractive. Crowds of tourists visit it on their passage up or down the lake, or when *en route* to the Simplon. Having finished our short but pleasant drive, and seated ourselves in a boat under a white awning, we were speedily rowed to Isola Bella, which is about a mile from the western shore. On approaching the islet, we see the most extraordinary piling up of garden terraces, sustained by walls and surmounted with figures in stone, reminding us of nothing so much as a fantastic piece of confectionary. Such is its southern extremity. Behind the terrace-gardens is a large mansion; and to fill up a nook on the west there is an irregular cluster of buildings, in which are comprehended a village, with a church, a hôtel, and harbour—gardens, mansion, and village covering every inch of the island, and yet the whole measuring only a few acres in extent. Any one who desires to know how to make the most of a barren islet should visit Isola Bella.

Originally, the island was little else than a mass of rock projecting irregularly from the surface of the water. It was made what it now is, at an immense cost, by Count Borromeo about 1671; the tradition being, that all the earth composing the terrace-gardens was brought from the mainland. The palace, which was never finished, occupies the northern extremity of the islet, and is a heavy but not inelegant building. It is a show-place, with seemingly no permanent resident; and we were conducted by its keeper through the extensive suites of apartments,

which are designed and decorated in the old French style, and hung with family and other pictures. From one of the galleries we are led into what may be termed the pleasure-ground, an enclosure of different heights, with forest trees to afford a cool retreat from the burning heat overhead. Here is shewn a large laurel-tree, in the bark of which Bonaparte, in one of his Italian campaigns, cut the word *battaglia*. The inscription has suffered very much. It is said that an Austrian soldier made a sabre-cut at the tree, as if to erase the word, and that the bark was afterwards taken away by an Englishman. The inscription is still partly legible. By flights of steps and winding walks we ascend and descend among the different terraces, on which and in the more spacious parterres, a variety of fine exotic plants from tropical climates grows in the open air.

The whole of what is shewn to strangers being seen in half an hour, we had some time to spare, and devoted it to an exploration of the village—a strange huddle of huts on different levels, inhabited by a fisher population, who eke out the means of subsistence by rearing silkworms, but for this purpose have to import fresh mulberry leaves from the mainland. What studies for the painter! Fantastic-shaped cottages with overhanging roofs, outside stairs, nets drying on poles, fishermen in red night-caps mending boats, children scrambling and rolling about, and shrivelled old crones seated at doors spinning with the distaff. The two great buildings in the group are the church and hôtel. We took a look of the church, which, besides an altar and some decorations, owns a banner of the Madonna for carrying about on festivals, though the extent of its perambulations must be limited to the crooked slip of quay which is scarcely fifty yards in length. Near the church, and overlooking the lake, is the hôtel—the Dauphin—a neat and comfortable house of entertainment. Having exhausted the sights of the island, we here finally sought some rest and refreshment. There are little pleasant spots in one's journey through life which are not to be readily effaced from memory. This brief visit to the Dauphin was one of them. Seated on the elevated platform at the door of the hôtel, underneath a canopy of orange-trees, we looked out on the placid lake and lofty peaks beyond—a scene of tranquil beauty, with no disturbing element, and rendered additionally enjoyable from that delicious softness in the air which is felt in perfection south of the Alps. In this insular retreat, we were taking farewell of the sunny south, its musical language, its hopeful social progress, and much that had afforded us amusement during our varied excursion. Here, likewise, we partook, for the last time, of our favourite Asti—a simple effervescing wine of Northern Italy, too weak and delicate, as I fancy, to bear being exported. With our host we had some conversation, and learned that, to relieve the pressure of demand for accommodation, he was about to build a large and splendid hôtel, at a pretty spot which he pointed out on the shore of the mainland—a good evidence this of general improvement. And thus we loitered and gossiped until the steamer was declared to be rounding the promontory from Arona. A boat, in one or two strokes of the oars, put us on board, and off we swept up the lake, passing shortly the other two Borromean isles, one densely covered with a fishing-village, and the other laid out as a pleasure-ground, with a modern villa.

The greater number of passengers designed to continue in the steamer to Magadino, at the top of the lake, in order to proceed by Bellinzona across the St Gothard to Lucerne. We did not proceed so far, but landed on the eastern shore at Luino, and thence by a carriage crossed a high ridge of ground to Lugano, where we arrived in the evening. Lugano is essentially an Italian town, but belongs to the Swiss canton of Tecino, which here awkwardly projects

south of the Alps. In it there is nothing to interest tourists, unless they are disposed to visit the cavernous and badly paved arcades which border the streets, and wish to see other evidences of a state of things much behind the spirit of the age. In singular contrast with the antiquated buildings and thoroughfares, the town possesses a *hôtel* in the western environs—*Hôtel de Parc*—as spacious and well managed as any establishment we had seen in Italy. Many of the Italian *hôtels*, as elsewhere noticed, were originally palazzos of nobility. This one at Lugano, as I understood, had been a monastery of a superior order; and if such is its history, its accommodations do credit to the taste of the monks. Near it, there is an English chapel. We found in the *hôtel* numerous families of English tourists, and as all the garçons spoke English, it really may be called an establishment specially adapted as a resort for our countrymen. In the neighbourhood there is some fine scenery, with scope for mountain rambles. The lake of Lugano, though comparatively small, is enlivened by hills of a rugged Alpine character, which, with the villages stuck about in nooks on its shores, would afford good subjects for the pencil. A steamer goes up the lake daily, and by this we had a pleasant voyage to Perliazzo, where we were again in Victor Emmanuel's dominions. By an open *cabêche* we were now conveyed across an irregular and picturesque neck of land to the shores of the lake of Como.

This appeared to us the most beautiful of all the Italian lakes, blending as it does the wild grandeur of the West Highlands with the softer features of Italian scenery—*châlets* high among mountain recesses, and vines on trellises enriching the lower slopes on the margin of the lake; nor should we omit the many splendid mansions of the Milanese and others, which adorn the banks amidst groves of the olive, myrtle, orange, and citron. Let no one with time to spare hurry over this charming piece of lake scenery. As a convenient central point for residence, none is better than Bellagio, situated on the promontory which divides the southern part of the lake into two branches. The two *Phyns* resided some time on the lake, and have left an account of its more remarkable phenomena.

From Colico, at the upper part of the lake, we made our way to Chiavenna, a town situated in a secluded valley at the southern base of the range of mountains which divides Italy from Switzerland. The ride to it was through a wild piece of country, with the rugged hills gradually closing in upon a marshy valley; at different places the road by temporary wooden bridges crossed impetuous torrents, which had carried away the regular means of communications, and brought down enormous masses of gravel and boulders from the ravines above. Chiavenna is the last Italian town in the route, and having remained here a night, we set out the following morning in an open carriage to make the passage of the Splügen. The ascent which immediately commences is striking and beautiful throughout. The road first winding its way amidst vineyards, gradually leaves the fertile enclosures of the villagers behind. After the region of vines comes that of fir and other trees; to that succeeds pasturages for goats and a small variety of cows, and the tinkle of bells hung round the necks of these animals falls pleasantly on the ear. By a series of ingeniously constructed zigzags, we were ascending a great gorge in the mountains, from which dashed roaring torrents and cascades, forming a turbulent little river in the narrow rocky valley. Far up in seemingly inaccessible spots were cottages with churches, but excepting very small fields of potatoes, in cleared patches among the rocks, all culture had ceased. At certain intervals we passed hamlets consisting of a poor order of dwellings, with usually a posting-house, on the front of which is an inscription on a marble tablet, denoting the height in

metres above the level of the sea. Ever toiling their way upward, the horses made so little progress that I got out and walked, in order more fully to enjoy the singularity of the scene, and collect a small species of ferns and other Alpine plants as a souvenir for a valued friend at home. After passing Campo Dolcino, the gorge becomes more precipitous, and we find the road at various places covered in with arches of solid masonry as a protection from the avalanches of snow that at certain seasons sweep down from the higher parts of the mountain. These arched passages, one of which is 1530 feet long, are lit by apertures on one side, resembling embrasures for cannon.

The height of the snow-line on the Splügen depends of course on the season. We began to find snow patches on the side of the road at the height of about 4500 feet. Advancing beyond this point, the wreaths of melting snow increased in quantity, and continued here and there in large patches to the summit. The more elevated peaks were entirely covered with a white mantle. Strangely, as we thought, the atmosphere was not cold, only a little chilly, in this snowy region. A thermometer suspended outside the carriage for half an hour, and occasionally held for a few minutes near the snow, did not indicate a lower temperature than 55°. Near the top is a group of solitary buildings which a few years ago were the dread of travellers entering Italy. They formed the Austrian custom-house, where passports were examined with such scrupulous jealousy, that for a trifling informality, tourists have been known to be turned back on their journey. Recent changes have swept away this nuisance, for, as is well known, the Italian government exacts no passports. On the front of one of the buildings, a tablet denotes 2007 metres (a metre is 39·37 inches); and as we ascend probably 150 feet above this point, I reckon the pass of the Splügen to be fully 6700 feet above the level of the sea; but the snow-clad peaks around are considerably higher. On the small bit of level road at the summit, we found a string of carriers' carts heavily laden with the entire apparatus of a gas-work from an engineering establishment at Zurich, *en route* for a town in Northern Italy. Reaching this altitude, we had gained the frontier, and our vehicle rolled rapidly down the winding steep into Switzerland.

According to the valedictory lines of Rogers, 'a parting word is due to Italy,' and that word I gladly utter, for it is a word which breathes of grateful remembrance for 'many a courtesy,' as well as for much to occupy agreeable recollection. My visit was in other respects satisfactory; for, though brief, it dispelled various illusions, and shewed me Italy as it is and as it is likely to be—a country in a state of active transition from ages of bitter wrong and suffering to the enjoyment of rational liberty. I had seen much to be amended, but also much that indicated progress under enlightened legislation and management. On the whole, things were very much better than I expected, and I had reason to feel that in ordinary society in England, the degree of advancement made by Italy is not properly understood. It is gratifying to have to say, not unadvisedly, of the country, that a long course of misusage has failed to greatly alter the naturally fine character of its people for the worse. Never, for any length of time, exposed to a grinding military uniformity, they have not lost individual character, and I venture to think that with all their buoyancy of temperament, they are more hearty, more thoughtful, and more capable of conducting a national life according to constitutional forms than the French. The advances already made wherever the Italian government has had fair-play, afford a good augury for the future. Unfortunately, there are still disturbing elements to cause the gravest anxiety for a people whose misfortunes should exempt them from further trials; but with a cordial

sympathy in the fate of Italy, now so critical, let us hope that nothing will occur to permanently arrest it in the career of national consolidation and prosperity.

W. C.

THE OLD HOUSE AT BROCKLEHURST.

WE were together in the parlour—my wife and I. It was not much past nine, but people kept early hours in those days, and supper had long been over; the children were in bed, and the house was quiet. I was leaning back in my easy-chair, wearied with my long day's work, and half asleep, when I was roused by my wife's voice saying, as she laid down her sewing: 'Have you thought or done anything yet, Alfred, about our going to the country?' Now, to tell the truth, I had thought a great deal, and had done—nothing. I knew Dr Elwyn had said that little Philip would never grow up a healthy boy in our close London house, and I was as anxious as any father need be about my child, but I knew too, by sad experience, how little a poor drawing-master with seven children has to spare for country trips. All this I said now to the wife, who always bore her full share of my heavy cares; but in her the mother's love conquered all else, and as I looked into her eyes, I saw, though she spoke little, that she would never rest until our boy was breathing the fresh country air he needed.

But the weeks passed away, and her worn face, and the few words she dropped from time to time, told me how constantly and vainly she watched for any chance of this. They had grown to months, when one evening she met me at the door radiant with gladness, and drawing me into the parlour, put into my hand a letter, exclaiming: 'Only read that, Alf, and tell me if it will not do.' It ran thus: 'Not three miles from here is a large house, Brocklehurst Grange, which having been empty many years, is now to be let at a very low rent. I could hardly advise Mr Sainsbury to take much trouble about it, for it looks so dreary and comfortless, that you would never like to live there. Still, in case my description does not alarm you, and you wish to hear more, I send the address of the agent in whose hands it is.' My wife hardly waited for me to read to the end. 'My aunt does not know,' she said anxiously. 'Think! it is large and cheap; and it must be near a coach-road, and near London, since it is close to Leekford, and that is such a healthy place. O Alfred, dear, we don't care for fine houses, and we could make it cheerful soon, I know, if only you think that it will do.' That was too much to say; but in pity for her imploring face, I promised at least to see the agent. I called at the office the next day, and found him in, and evidently glad to hear of a possible tenant. The house, he said, had belonged to a Mr Abbott, who had lived and died abroad. The nephew, who had just inherited his property, preferred receiving a rent, however small, to spending money on the place. The agent could not help discouraging a little on the short-sighted economy of this proceeding, since the building was in fair repair, and only needed the outlay of a few hundreds to make it comfortable; but it was, he added, no affair of his, and he had only to obey orders. In conclusion, he pressed me to inspect it for myself. I felt inclined to do so, but as I could not well spare a whole day, there was a difficulty. The agent himself resolved it by proposing that I should go down by an afternoon coach, the time of which he mentioned, and return the following morning. There were, he said, living in charge of the house, two old servants of Mr Abbott's, with their son, who had been there now for many years. 'I cannot promise you a warm reception,' he added smiling; 'at least if they treat you as they did me. They evidently fear to be turned out of their domain, and regarded me so gloomily, that my survey was of the briefest. Still,

if you don't mind sour looks, they can, I know, provide you with a bed, and, as the village is only two miles off, with supper also.'

It seemed my wisest plan, since I could thus judge of the daily journey I might have to make, and see the house under its morning and its evening aspect; so, mindful of my wife's anxiety, I determined to lose no time, and obtained from the agent a letter to the old man in charge. With this letter, I made my way to the coach-office the following afternoon; but when there, found, much to my vexation, that the agent had mistaken the time of the coach's starting, and that we should not be off for two hours. There was nothing for it but to wait patiently; but through this delay, it was nearly six o'clock instead of four when I was set down at a village inn two miles from Brocklehurst. I was just about to inquire my way of some of the boys lounging about the inn door, when it occurred to me that it might be wiser to hire one of them as guide. The short February afternoon was closing in, and I might miss my road alone, and so lose time, and besides, from these country lads I might learn something of the house and neighbourhood; so I chose out a bright-faced active youth, who readily closed with my offer, and started off with me at once along the village street, and down a lane, and then over a stile into the fields, his tongue going incessantly all the while. He could tell little, as it seemed, about the Grange; only that, within his memory, no one had ever lived there but the Pearces, 'a queer crusty set,' he said. The son got work sometimes with the farmers near, but the old people rarely left the house, and even when they went abroad, exchanged few words with any they might meet. But if his information on this one point was small, on all others it was most abundant: the names and histories of the neighbouring squires, and who preserved and who did not; the land owned by each farmer, and the character he bore among his men; this, and much more, he told me as we trudged onwards.

'There,' he said, as we came out of a thick fir plantation, and stood on the edge of a dreary broken bit of common covered with gorse and heath—'do you see the red brick house yonder by the gravel-pit?' I looked the way his finger pointed, and through the gathering twilight just discerned a long low building. 'I'll tell you what, sir,' he said in a low tone, and coming closer to my side, 'there's not a lad in all the village would venture round there after nightfall, for there was murder done at that house not two years ago.'

'Murder!' I exclaimed.

'Yes, and the cruellest murder it was too. An old gentleman used to live there—not so very old either, not much past sixty, I've heard say; but however that might be, he lived there quite alone, except for one young servant-woman, who kept his house. A pleasant-spoken lass Ann Forrest was, and many's the kind word she's said to me when she's been to mother's shop. She always seemed to take great care of her old master, and no wonder, for he was the best old man that ever lived, and a good master to her; but he had money laid by, and that must have tempted her, for one morning some labourers going past found the front-door open, the house deserted, and the poor old gentleman lying covered with blood, and quite dead, at the bottom of the garden. They say he used to go down there to smoke his pipe at night, and she chose that time, when she knew he could lay hold of nothing to defend himself with. An old iron box, in which the old man kept his money, and which only she knew where to find, was lying, turned bottom uppermost and empty, in the passage; and there were clothes and many other things scattered about the floor of her room, and in one of her drawers they found a long knife that she had hidden there. But they never found her; and from that day to this no one has heard of her.'

It was a horrible story to listen to, with the black darkness closing round us, and the lonely house close by. We hastened on in silence across the common, down a dark steep road, and through some meadows, until, as we passed from the free air into the shadow of a wood, the boy said, in his former cheery tone: 'There, sir, now you can see the old warren through the trees.' A faint dark outline—that was all I could make out, as my companion unfastened a gate, pointed the way up a neglected drive, and saying that he should run across the fields, and so home by the high-road, bade me good-night. The old gate swung to with a dismal creak, and I was left to grope my way alone. On I went, brushing past shrubs, whose long boughs swept the ground, and stumbling over ruts and stones, until I reached an open space that had once been gravel, but now was overgrown with moss and weeds, and crossing this, stood in front of the old house itself. The walls, as I could see, even by that dim light, were weather-stained and darkened to a dull brown; three sharp gables high above cut into the gray sky; and higher still there rose a sort of dome from the centre of the building. The rising moon cast a faint gleam on the latticed oriel windows, and the quaint stone carvings round the entrance-door, and gave a strange weird aspect to the solitary dwelling. The clang of the bell echoed through the stillness within; then silence settled down once more. I waited long, then rang again, and at length there was a sound of steps and voices; at first, far away, then nearer. A key grated in the rusty lock, and the door was partly opened by an old man, whose short thick-set figure at once filled up the way, as though to prevent a hasty entrance. Behind him stood a woman, somewhat bent by age, and holding in her hand a lantern. Both stared at me in silent wonderment, as, addressing myself to the old man, I told my errand. It was well I was prepared for sullenness, for his furrowed brow darkened as, still standing in the doorway, he spelled out the agent's letter.

'A strange thing,' he muttered. 'We might have had some notice, I should think; we want no gentle-folks here.' My spirit rose at this insolence, but remembering his age and surly temper, I restrained myself, and said that I had meant to arrive sooner, but need give little trouble, as some bread and cheese and a bed for the night were all I should require. The man stood doubtful, as though half inclined to shut to the door in my face; then his mind changed, and without a word, he took the lantern from his wife's hand, and, signing to me to follow, led the way across a bare and lofty hall, and along two stone passages, to a large kitchen, where a fire was blazing. Setting down the lantern on the table, he turned round and said: 'You'll maybe see that this is the kitchen. If you're too proud to sit here, there are other rooms in plenty, but you'll find no fires or candles;' and without waiting for a reply, he walked away. I turned to the woman, who had followed us, and now stood by the fire, and asked some question carelessly; but she answered me briefly, with a hurried glance at her husband; and, weary of attempting to conciliate, I said abruptly, that as my time was short, I would see the house at once.

'There's a very little you'll be able to see at this time of night,' old Pearce said gruffly from the window where he stood.

'At least,' I answered, 'I can go through the rooms, and get some notion of their size;' and I made a move.

For a moment, it seemed as though they meant to let me go alone; then Pearce stepped suddenly forward, and harshly calling to his wife to bring the keys, caught up the light. Preceded by my unwilling guides, I traversed long passages, our footsteps sounding hollow on the stone floors, mounted staircases, and crossed landings. We stopped from time to time while the woman unlocked the doors of empty and unshut-

tered rooms, where dust lay thick, and the feeble glimmer of the lantern only served to make the gloom and desolation more apparent. No word was spoken by either of the two, save in answer to my questions, until we reached a large chamber, once a drawing-room, as I could guess by the gilt mouldings and two tall mirrors let into the wall. As I entered and looked round, the old man drew his wife outside the door, and when they had exchanged some whispered words, sent her down stairs, and, coming to my side, began to tell me how, thirty years before, in Mrs Abbott's days, grand balls were often given in this very room, and how a portrait of her dressed for one of them still hung in the library beyond; and then he led me in to look at the pale faded face in gold and crimson turban, gazing fixedly upon us from the wall. As I turned from it, the woman again joined us, resumed her keys, and the man's sullen humour coming over him once more, we went on in the old silence until we reached the foot of a narrow winding staircase. My conductors had begun to mount it, when I touched a door upon my right, and said: 'Surely we have not been in here?' The man, half-way up, stopped and looked down at me. 'No,' he said; 'it is only a lumber-room; the key has been lost this long while: if you wish to get in, you must have a fresh key made before you come again;' and he went on. It was a large rambling house, where you came suddenly upon cupboards and corners, and bits of winding stairs, or a step up here and down there, and passages with such queer turns and twists, that one wondered whether they would lead; still there was something quaint about it that took my fancy greatly. When at last we got back to the kitchen, a man sat by the fire unlacing his boots, and with his back towards the door. He turned as I entered, and displayed a muscular form and heavy face, like enough to old Pearce's to mark him as his son. He returned my greeting with a silent stare, resumed his seat, and pulling at his father's sleeve, muttered angrily: 'And who on earth may you be?' I did not catch the answer, but the gruff snort that followed was sufficiently expressive.

The woman set about preparing supper, and presently a repast of bacon, eggs, and beer was put before me; and while I was engaged upon it, she and her husband went away together. The son sat on watching me in silence for a while, then followed them, leaving me alone for the first time since I had come into the house. He and his father soon came back, but a change had come upon them; their sullenness was gone, and they seemed most eager to hear my intentions about the place. It was evident how much they feared that I might take it, and so deprive them of their home; and in this fear, they caught at every doubt of mine, and tried to foster it. From their account, the place was hot in summer, cold in winter; it was even tumbling to pieces; and it almost touched me, when, turning to the son, I said: 'And yet you seem to like to live in it,' to hear his curt answer: 'I've been bred up here, and that makes a deal of difference.' When the woman at last returned, I saw that she had been crying very bitterly, and with a half-remorseful feeling, I took a candle from her trembling hand, and followed her upstairs. They had chosen for me one of the old state-bedrooms, on the first floor, and a long way from the kitchen and the hall, at the end of a wide gallery. She paused at the door to say that she hoped I might find all I wanted, but that if not, there was a bell, and giving me no time to answer, hurried off. The room was large and lofty, and must have once been richly furnished, for there were cushions of faded blue silk in the window-seats, and blue silk drapery about the windows; but all its other furniture had disappeared, and it was bare and carpetless like the rest. At one end, a trestle bedstead had just been put up, and near it stood a wash-hand stand

and glass, and a couple of rickety chairs. That was all; and very meagre and comfortless it looked; but I could expect nothing else, and cared little. I sat long, noting down in my pocket-book all I had observed, and pondering on various things, until the dull tones of the far-off stable-clock striking twelve aroused me, and I began to prepare for bed. Before lying down, I went instinctively across the room to secure the door, and found, to my surprise, that I was without the means of doing so, for there was no bolt, and the key was not in the lock. For a moment, I was startled; then I remembered that the keys of all the rooms had been on one large bunch, and no doubt the woman had forgotten to take this one off. Should I ring for it? I paused undecided; but the hour was late, the people must long since have been in bed, and I was strangely unwilling to encounter those surly looks again to-night. After all, it mattered little. Travelling as I did without luggage or money, and in simple, almost shabby dress, I had nothing to lose, and with health and strength in my favour, none would choose lightly to encounter me; and so, without disquietude, I blew out my light, and lay down in bed. Still I was not in darkness, for the moon shone full into the room, only obscured from time to time as a heavy cloud swept across, and passing, seemed to leave it more clear and beautiful than ever. I lay long gazing, through one of the two large windows on my right, at the soft radiance of its face, the hurrying clouds, and the bright stars that studded the dark sky, and thinking, as husbands and fathers are wont to think, of the wife and children at home—thinking of the little feet that might one day go dancing over these uncarpeted floors, of my wife and myself sitting together in that grand deserted drawing-room, and planning busily how far our homely London furniture could fit it up. Gradually my plans turned into dreamy fancies, my fancies faded, and I slept soundly—for how long, whether for minutes or hours, I cannot tell, but I woke in an instant, and with a sudden start and thrill. All was quiet—a cloud had veiled the moon, and the room was dark and still as death. No, not so still; what was that which, as I held my breath, came faintly on my ear? A rustling—so slight that I could scarcely catch it, yet surely a rustling in the far corner of the room. I was a man of strong nerves. In my youth, I had been in perils both by sea and land, and I had ever kept my courage and composure. I did not lose them now. These men below might, despite the risk, be purposing to rob me; they might even, in their anger and revenge at my mission here, meditate worse things; but if the absence of the key had been no accident, and they were now in my room, they should find harder work than they had looked for. I had no firearms; but a loaded stick, which went with me in all my journeyings, was by my bed's head now. Slowly and cautiously, my hand stole out in the darkness, and grasped it tight. Then I waited. For a while there was perfect silence; then the sound began afresh, and there—there by the door, I could just see a moving form! On it came, then stopped, as though listening, and hearing nothing but my steady breathing, came on again, nearer and nearer, until, as it reached the foot of my bed, I sprang up. My stick was raised, was ready to descend, when the moon shone out again, and my hand dropped to my side, for a woman stood before me—not the old woman I had seen, but one many years younger, clad in dark garments, with pale, haggard face and wild eyes. What was it? a spirit, an escaped madwoman, or some plot to frighten me? As that last thought came into my mind, I summoned breath to ask: 'Who, in Heaven's name, are you?'

'O hush, hush!' moaned out a voice feeble and piteous as a crying child's. 'Don't speak, don't let them hear!'

'They! Who are *they*, and who are you?'

'I will tell—I came to tell;' and with sudden vehemence the figure seized my arm in a convulsive grasp. 'I am a poor creature, whom, for eighteen months, those wretches have kept imprisoned in this house, away from all who might have given me help. You are the first living soul who has been here; and I vowed to myself, that if I died for it, I would come to pray you to protect me; and oh, dear sir, kind sir, have pity on me!'

As she gasped out those words with passionate earnestness, yet in faint faltering tones, something seemed to tell me that this was no insane delusion, and no concerted scheme.

'My poor woman,' I said soothingly, in a whisper low as her own, 'I will help you, if I can, but you must shew me how. What is your name, and why are you here?'

'They brought me—I had seen them do it—no one else, and they dared not leave me behind to tell; so, when they had murdered him, they brought me here, and shut me into the dreadful room upstairs. I am Ann Forrest.'

The boy's tale, the Pearces' reluctance to let the house be seen, the closed lumber-room—those few words threw light upon it all, and in my horror, I could not speak at first, I could hardly even think. At last I asked how she had freed herself.

'There were three rusty broken keys—I found them one day under some rubbish in an old chest up there, and I tried them all, and one fitted; but I dared not use it while they were always down stairs, and so I hid it again. They would have killed me long ago, but she—the woman—is kinder than the others, and would never let them, and to-night she talked and cried about your being here, and her husband's anger, little dreaming how I heeded her, for they think me almost silly now. But I did heed; and I thought that you would help me perhaps; and so, when I knew that they must all be in bed, I brought out my key, and it unlocked the door; and then I listened outside every room until I found you by your breathing.' She stopped at that last word, and looked at me with a wistful searching glance. 'I found you,' she repeated, 'and now, O sir, you will not forsake me.'

'I will not,' I answered; but when I paused to think, a sense of our danger rushed upon me. Alone in this house, more than a mile from any human aid, how could I defend her or myself from men desperate, as these would be, if they only guessed that I knew their terrible secret. I, with a wife and children looking to me, had no right uselessly to peril my life. I must be cautious; and if it came to the worst, then I could but try what one strong arm in a good cause could do against two villains. So I spoke gently to the woman, holding her hand as she stood beside me, and trying to quiet her agony of terror and despair, while I said that I *would* save her, but to do it at this moment would not be possible. 'Only wait till morning. Go back now to your prison, and trust to me.' She started and shuddered.

'The key stuck in the lock; it would not come out,' she said. 'They may find it there, and then they will murder me, as they have threatened.'

'Listen!' I whispered. 'There is no sign that they have heard us yet. Go back, and try—try with all your strength to loosen the key, and lock yourself in again; then you need fear nothing, for they cannot guess. I will watch: if you need me, cry out, and I will come—if not, wait and hope for the morning that shall bring you safety and release; only go now, before they find us together.'

She seemed to understand, and moved towards the door submissively, then stopped: 'You would not deceive me?' she said. The look and tone were so imploring, so inexpressibly mournful, that my heart smote me for letting her go, for remembering

anything but her misery. She gazed into my face: 'I know you would not,' she said in quite another voice, and again turned away, I following her. Her fingers softly turned the handle; she crept into the passage, and I watched the tall dark form fitting along the gallery, her bare feet moving noiselessly upon the boards. I listened breathlessly, but there was neither sound nor movement in the house. The old couple slept at the foot of the back-staircase and near the kitchen, the son in a small room close to the hall, never dreaming that the prisoner they had kept securely all those months would find means to force her prison on this very night—only the woman even knowing that she had heard of my presence in the house. If any chance noise awoke those sleepers, if any chance suspicion had turned them into watchers, then it might be a struggle of life and death. No; all was still as yet. The moonlight flooded the room, as, closing the door, I softly crossed to the window-seat, and sat down there to listen and to think. Think—think of what? A horrible crime, a secret prison-house not twenty miles from London, the work that must be done to-morrow: all these things seemed crowded together wildly in my brain. By degrees, I grew calmer. I must release her, but how? Many ways flashed across me, and were cast aside again; so I sat motionless, gazing into the sky, my ear strained for any cry, until the first faint streak of dawn came into the east. No sound had broken the dead silence of the house, and now at last my plan was made, and might be tried. I dressed quietly, then waited for a while, and as the red rim of the rising sun shewed through the trees, tramped noisily down stairs. I meant that they should hear and see me, but no one appeared; so, crossing to the kitchen, I looked in. The old man was there cutting up wood; he did not hear my step till I was close upon him, then turned sharply round: 'You rise early,' he said in the old surly tone.

With all the blood in my veins curdling in sight of that wicked, murderous face, I forced my lips to speak naturally: 'Why, yes,' I said: 'I want to see something of the grounds before I breakfast. Can you tell me the best way to take?'

'I know nought about it,' he answered: 'there's nothing worth seeing anywhere about here.'

'Where does the garden lie?' I asked. The instant I had spoken, I felt that my question, meant to divert suspicion, had been a rash one. He looked up, a new expression in his eyes—was it fear or doubt?

'There is no garden now,' he said hastily: 'it's a wilderness; and breakfast will be ready directly, if only that old idiot,' and he shouted his wife's name, 'was here, as she should be.'

The precious minutes were slipping fast away, and yet I dared not seem in haste. The old man had returned to his chopping, and the monotonous thud of the hatchet alone sounded through the room. Presently I said carelessly: 'Well, I'm just going for a turn in the wood now, and presently I shall get you to go round with me.' I had not done speaking when the old woman's door opened, and I heard her foot beginning slowly to ascend the stairs. Was she going *there*? All might, perchance, be safe; but if that broken key *should* still be in the lock, the secret was betrayed. In desperation, I racked my brains for some device to bring her back: 'Stay,' I exclaimed to the old man; 'isn't that your wife? I want her to get me, if she can, some eggs and vegetables to take to town; I will pay well.'

His eyes brightened, and absorbed in that promise, he never saw the agitation of my manner; he stepped to the door: 'Meg,' he called, 'the gentleman wants ye. Come down, will ye?'

A pause—then she said from above: 'I shan't be long.'

I breathed hard.

'Come now,' he called again; 'the gentleman's

waiting;' and then the foot came slowly down. A few minutes later, I saw her, with relief no words can tell, go off with a basket on her arm to the hen-house and garden. Now was my time, and there was not a moment to lose. Followed by old Pearce, I crossed the hall. As I stood waiting while he unfasted the door, the lad's words about the son came to my mind. He might be away; if so—if there were but this one man to face, I would battle it out alone, and not leave her for an hour in their hands.

'I don't know,' I said carelessly, 'whether your son's at home; if so, would he direct me, by and by, to Leekford, and carry my bag and basket?'

'Yes, he can go,' was the reply.

That course, then, was hopeless, and I must try the other way. Slowly I sauntered along the wood-path, pausing from time to time to look with seeming interest at the trees and shrubs around me and back at the old house, and still that man stood in the doorway looking after me. At last I turned my head, and he was gone; but while within sight of those windows, I dared not quicken my pace. A few steps more, and I was close to the old gate; I leaned upon it for a minute, then unlatched it, and passed through. All was still and quiet in the early morning light, save a rabbit bounding across the path, and the rooks cawing overhead. I went on a little way, then stopped, and once again looked back. The old house was hidden now, and no human figure was in sight. Another glance, and then away like the wind through fields and woods, and over the common where the low red house stood in its solitude. On I went, into the fir plantation, through more fields, and then clambering a fence, made for a white house upon the brow of a hill near. That house, my boy-guide had said, belonged to a Mr Archer; and he had said, too, that he was a magistrate. Little as I had noticed his words at the time, all—the name, the place—had come fresh to my mind in my night-watch, and I was going there to ask his aid. On, on; and now my labouring breath was failing, and my feet seemed fastened to the ground; but still I struggled forward, and at last, thank Heaven for it! I had gained the door. A gentleman was riding from it. I stopped before him, panted out 'Mr Archer,' and then everything reeled before me, and I staggered against a pillar. With my dizzy eyes, I saw Mr Archer—for he it was—turn his horse, and dismount; but he had stood before me for some minutes asking my name and errand before I could entreat a moment's speech alone with him. He looked surprised; then led the way indoors to a small study. In a few hurried words, I told him all; but as I went on, I saw the wonder in his face turning to disbelief, and the kind, thoughtful eyes involuntarily glancing now at my disordered dress, now at my flushed and agitated face. He thought me mad. With a great effort, I composed myself, steadied my voice, and said: 'You think this a wild story, but I swear solemnly that every word is true, and I call on you as a magistrate to give me help.'

He was silent for a moment; then replied: 'As a magistrate and as a man, I should be bound to help, if this were so; but pardon me, it *does* seem a wild story; and I should hardly like, without strong proof, to enter a man's house with such a charge.'

I laid my hand upon his arm: 'Listen,' I said; 'I can give you this proof only, that on the truth of what I say hangs my own character. If you go with me, and find it false, *you* have only been deluded by a madman or a rogue; if you refuse to go, after my words, her blood and mine may be upon your head, for I, at any rate, shall instantly return there.'

He hesitated, then said: 'You speak strongly; and at least, as you say my going can do little harm, I am ready.'

I stopped him again. 'Not alone. Let some of your servants go with us. Not for my own sake, I

added, as a half-smile curled his lip; 'I only ask one man's aid; but I would not draw you into danger; and they are both strong men, and may have to be secured.'

'And if not?' he said.

'If not, you have been deluded,' I repeated.

'Very well, so be it,' he answered.

Half an hour later, Mr Archer and myself, with two servants, stood before the door of Brocklehurst Grange. All seemed as undisturbed and quiet as when I had left it, hardly more than an hour ago. Was it as peaceful within? Were they still going about their daily work, expecting my return, while the solitary prisoner upstairs waited and watched for me in suspense that would be ended now? I rang, but no one came at first in answer to the summons. A terror seized me. Could they have murdered her, and fled, leaving the house deserted? There had surely not been time for that. No; there were steps sounding on the floor, and the rattle of the door-chain as it fell. A moment more, and I should know. The key turned, and the door was opened wide this time by old Pearce alone, quietly regarding us with the old sullen look, and no more. They had guessed nothing yet, and now it mattered little that the three men by my side must shew him all.

'You have had a long walk, sir,' he said; 'and what may this gentleman want?' as Mr Archer stepped forward.

I looked him full in the face. 'He has come to take Ann Forrest from this house.'

At that name, I thought to see him turn pale or spring upon me, but no feature altered—no change came over the dogged face. Then all at once my heart misgave me. Mr Archer looked embarrassed.

'I would not willingly,' he said, 'intrude upon you, or suspect you of the horrible crime with which this gentleman charges you; but he is so positive, that, if you can, you ought, for your own sake, to clear yourself.'

Pearce looked at him unmoved. 'You are Mr Archer of Holme Green, I think. Why you are here, and what this man means, perhaps you can tell, for I cannot.'

'This is what I mean,' I said. 'Ann Forrest, whose master you murdered two years ago, is now secretly detained in this house, lest she should accuse you as the murderers. She is in the room which you call a lumber-room, and I am going there now.'

'You are welcome to go there or anywhere, all of you, though I know no right you have to search this house. It signifies little to me what you do, and this is all of a piece with your conduct this morning;' and turning on his heel, he went back to the kitchen.

My companions exchanged looks, and I saw that the old villain's cunning words had strengthened their suspicions of me. That strange, that horrible composure, what could it mean? With a sick heart, I led the way upstairs to the locked door where I had stood the night before; it was locked now, and above it hung the key. Could I have mistaken the place? No, there was the narrow passage just before me, the winding staircase above me and below. I snatched down the key, unlocked the door, and entered a desolate room half filled with boxes and old furniture; beyond it was another room quite empty, with no sign in either of human habitation. This, then, was what the old man's calmness meant; yet I searched, searched despairingly on every side, in every nook and corner, Mr Archer looking on silently the while. All in vain! She was gone, and not a trace of her was left. I went into the other rooms; I left no spot unvisited; I groaned aloud in my bitter remorse for having left her to her fate. What had that fate been? That was the thought that lay heavy at my heart, as we went at last to the kitchen. As we were about to enter it, Mr Archer drew me aside.

'You remember,' he said, 'your own words when you brought me here. I have been patient; I have given you every chance; now comes your turn. For my sake and your own, as well as the men you have wronged, you must confess openly either to a cruel slander, or —'

'An insane fancy,' I said, finishing the sentence. 'Not yet. There are gardens and outhouses; I must search them. They may even have carried her off.'

'How could they, in broad daylight? You here till an hour ago, and no cart or horse about the place—that at least is impossible. Besides, the man is here.'

I said nothing in reply. What could I say? The old man was still alone, and sitting by the fire as we passed through the kitchen to the back-door. He raised his head, and, pointing to a basket on the table, said: 'My wife got those ready before she went to market. I don't ask if you have found anything upstairs, because there was nothing to find; but I hope you are satisfied.'

I was silent; but Mr Archer paused to say a few words before following me out upon my fruitless quest. Everywhere, in lofts and sheds, summer-houses and stables, round the gardens and yards—on all sides I hunted, and hunted in vain. The fowls in the chicken-yard, the old dog in his kennel, were the only living beings that met my eyes; and turning to Mr Archer, I said at last: 'I give it up.'

'And withdraw your accusations?' he asked.

'It is useless pressing them,' I answered bitterly; 'but how can I disbelieve my own senses?'

'Even our senses may deceive us,' he said quietly.

I knew what he meant very well. His first step, when we returned again to the kitchen, was to go up to old Pearce, and apologise gravely and formally for the disturbance he had caused. His next was to turn to me saying: 'There can be no further reason for my remaining; I will wish you good-morning, hoping that your painful impressions may wear off.'

His words came in strangely with the thought in my own mind. Was it, after all, a dream, a delusion of my own, created by the lad's story and the desolate house? Had that midnight visit existed in my own fancy alone? Was Mr Archer right, and was I going mad? With that horrible idea now first striking me, I stood silent until Mr Archer again repeated his farewell. Then I roused myself. 'Good-bye,' I said. 'After all, you may be right, and I wrong. Stop!' And my voice in a new tone echoed through the room. I was standing by the window, and close to my right hand was a common kitchen cupboard, and at that very instant I had heard a moan come from it. I never could have heard it had I not been so near; I could hardly hear it now; but I turned, and laid my hand upon the key, and as I did so, the old man with an oath sprang up and rushed upon me. There was a confused struggle, a loud outcry, and he was on the ground, and I was wrenching open the door. It yielded to my strength, and there, on the floor of that narrow closet, bound hand and foot, and gagged, lay the poor woman for whom I had been seeking, powerless to move or cry out, though with help so near, and only able, by her desperate efforts, to utter that one faint moan which had just reached my ears. We lifted her up, and unbound her, but she spoke no word, only her wild eyes roamed incessantly about, and she clung to me with a grasp that seemed as though it never would unloose. I and Mr Archer led her away, leaving the two men to bring old Pearce afterwards, for he made no resistance, and only glared savagely round upon us all.

It was many hours before Ann Forrest could speak of what had happened to her; but that afternoon, in Mr Archer's study, her hand still clasping mine, she told her dreadful tale—how in old times she had known the Peaces well, and once had even helped to nurse the woman; how they had asked her carelessly

one day about her master's money-box, and she had told them, not thinking any harm, and had never dreamed of any until the cruel deed was done. That evening she had been busy in the house till after nightfall, and then went down the garden to call her master in to supper; but as she neared the spot where he was wont to sit, she saw two figures bending over something on the ground, and as she stood to watch, saw, too, that it was her master who lay there, and running forward with a cry in sudden horror, had fallen the next moment, stunned by a blow upon the head. She knew no more until she woke to find herself in the lonely room at Brocklehurst, and learned that they had brought her there, to ward suspicion from themselves; that her life had for the time been spared, because the woman, bearing grateful memory of that old kind nursing, had vowed to tell all if they harmed her, and might have kept her vow; and so for all those terrible months one weak woman alone had stood between her and a frightful death. Of the end of that suspense, of the morning when the old man, coming up alone, had found the key, despite the frantic efforts she had made, still in the lock, and guessing the secret from that and from her terror, had bound and hidden her from her approaching deliverers, and arranging all things in her prison, had sent his wife and son away, and stayed himself on guard—of all this she could not even now speak without convulsive shudders, and we did not press her.

My story is well-nigh told. The father and son suffered for their crimes, the woman was mercifully dealt with. We did not take Brocklehurst Grange, for we could not bear that our innocent children should live in scenes darkened by such deeds; but we did go elsewhere. Years afterwards, there might be seen moving about our house a pale, tall woman, darkly dressed, gentle in manner, and very, very quiet. To her my wife turned for sympathy in every trouble; in her arms the children loved to lie when sick or sorrowful. From her I had the most faithful and devoted service; and she died at last, holding my hand, and thanking me with her eyes, even when her voice was silenced for ever. Her name was Ann Forrest.

THE MONTH: SCIENCE AND ARTS.

By the time these lines appear in print, we shall know to what extent science has been advanced by the meeting of the British Association at Cambridge, and even newspaper readers will have gathered from the various addresses some notion of what savans, travellers, statisticians, and naturalists have been doing within the past twelve months. By the same period, the International Exhibition will be near its close: that marvellous collection of art and industry will be on the eve of dispersion to the four quarters of the globe; and we may hope that henceforth many an ingenious mind and many a cunning hand, profiting by the rich lesson, will conceive the more clearly, and work the more faithfully. Such a lesson—such an opportunity of witnessing concentrated skill and experience, we are not likely to see again in England for many a year to come.

After all this excitement, there seems an unusual sobriety in the preparations which the various scientific societies are making for the commencement of their sessions. Important papers may be expected in the Royal Society; the Linneans and Geographicals have interesting news from abroad, among which, alas! is announced the death of Mrs Livingstone, wife of the most enterprising of African missionaries and travellers. Many a true heart on both sides of the Tweed will sympathise with him in his sorrow.

The last experiments at Shoeburyness have only confirmed the anticipations of sagacious thinkers who

have all along maintained that invulnerable iron ships are an impossibility, and that the days of wooden ships are not yet over. Mr Whitworth has invented a hard-headed iron shell which, fired from a 12-pounder, completely riddles the iron sides of an ordinary gun-boat. With a 70-pounder shell, a double target representing a section of a double-sided gun-boat, was as effectually shattered; and it was demonstrated that even the *Warrior* could be sunk by one shot from the great 300-pounder Mersey gun. These are instructive facts, suggestive of many conclusions, of which one is, that to spend millions of money on iron ships before experiments are exhausted, is unwise; another, that the folly and wickedness of war are likely to become more and more costly.

A new kind of gunpowder has been tried at Frankfurt. Its colour is yellowish-brown, and in general appearance it resembles saw-dust. The inventor is Mr Schultz, captain of artillery in the Prussian service, and he is shewing by experiment that this new powder is cheaper, lighter, more powerful than the ordinary sort; moreover, that even after thirty rounds, the gun remains as clean as at the commencement. The national shooting-matches afforded a good opportunity for trial of this new compound, of which the ingredients are not yet made public, and further experiments are making at Spandau by order of the Prussian government. It appears, too, that the Austrian authorities have been making experiments with gun-cotton, by cannonading one of their forts at Verona. The success at 600 and 1000 metres is said to have been incontestable; and the impulsive force of the cotton as compared with powder is as nine to four.

We may form some notion of scientific movements abroad from the questions proposed by different academies. The Batavian Society of Experimental Philosophy at Rotterdam desires a series of observations on the temperature of the ocean at great depths, considering that the question is one of very great importance in studying the physical constitution of the globe. Another subject it proposes is, a crystallographic examination of certain inorganic matters in which the crystalline form is sufficiently developed to allow of a determination of the cleavage. This subject is to be discussed in all its bearings; it is one which, as is well known to chemists and geologists, has an essential bearing on the chemical and geological structure of the globe. Another question is—What is the origin of lactiferous vessels (*vasa lactea*) in the vegetable kingdom? Another—Required an anatomico-physiological examination of the diseases of one of the most important cultivated plants, accompanied by a criticism of the principal theories concerning those diseases, and an indication of the means by which they are to be prevented or opposed. The next question is one which will be regarded with interest wherever manufacturing operations are carried on: the Society require an exact consideration of this point—When steam-boilers burst (other causes apart) is there reason to suppose a development of hydrogen gas or a transition of the water to the spheroidal state? the investigation to be confirmed by a collection of exact reports concerning the cases of burst boilers, and, if possible, by special experiments.

The Dutch Society of Sciences at Haarlem, among questions in chemistry, natural history, and hydraulics, call for an answer to the following: 'Everywhere in Europe the diluvium contains the bones of mammifera; required a comparative examination of the position of these bones in different places, leading, if not with certainty, at least with strong probability, to a knowledge of the causes of their submergence, and the manner in which it took place.'—The next is astronomical: Mr Airy has expressed doubts concerning the means by which the movement of the sun with the planetary system through space has hitherto been deduced from the

apparent movements of the fixed stars, and he proposes a new method for the same end: required new and exact researches upon the whole of the phenomena involved in the question.—Another subject is, to investigate the nature of the substances contained in the vapour of water produced by the respiration of man and animals in a state of health; the investigation to be extended, if possible, to the substances exhaled in certain maladies, contagious especially, with not only a chemical analysis, but with an examination of their hurtful effects on different animals.—The prizes offered by this Haarlem Society are a gold medal worth 150 florins, and money to the same amount. Lastly, the Royal Academy of Medicine at Brussels offer a prize of 500 francs to the author of the best paper containing an elucidation of the causes, or suggestions for the treatment, of the diseases to which miners working in the coal-mines of Belgium are particularly exposed. A good answer to this question will doubtless be found useful in England.

Astronomy is making progress in Switzerland: hitherto there has been but one observatory in that country, at Geneva; but ere long there will be four in active operation. One has just commenced work at Neuchâtel; another is in preparation at Zürich, which will be under the direction of Mr Rodolphe Wolf, whose labours as an observer of sun-spots have been more than once noticed in this Journal. The fourth is to be established at Basel, where the necessary funds have already been set apart for the purpose. Neuchâtel, as is well known, is the centre of a large trade in clocks and watches, and it was from a desire on the part of the best makers to produce movements of the greatest precision, that the observatory originated. By means of astronomical observations, they can now always get the true time; and they have taken care to furnish the observatory with the most improved instruments, and to adopt the chronograph for recording the observations. The electric clock of the observatory will regulate the clocks of the town, and signals may be sent to a distance by means of the telegraph. Chronometers manufactured at Neuchâtel are in good repute; specimens were sent to the International Exhibition, and being tested on arrival at Greenwich, they shewed a difference of longitude between the two places which corresponds exactly with that obtained by astronomical observations. This in itself is satisfactory evidence of excellent workmanship.

We gather from the *Bulletin* of the Egyptian Institute at Paris, that an English traveller, struck by the dilapidated appearance of Pompey's Pillar, has offered to pay the cost of restoration on one condition, which is so simple that we cannot doubt of its acceptance—namely, that the monument, when restored, shall be surrounded by a railing, to preserve it from further mutilation. The same publication informs us that an Arab poet has composed a poem in which he sings the 'future benefits which the Suez canal is to produce in his country;' and that a skull, perfectly bleached, has been found in a hypogeum, near Cape Lochias, which presents the negro characteristics in so remarkable a degree as to leave no room to doubt its being the skull of a negro. We mention the fact, as it may be of some importance in ethnological inquiry; and it gives us pleasure to be able to state further, that excavations long suspended at Nineveh are about to be resumed under direction of the British consul. Apropos of skulls, we take the opportunity to remark, that among the short papers published in the last number of the Royal Society's *Proceedings*, there is one 'On the Distorted Skulls found at Wroxeter (Salop), with a Mechanico-chemical Explanation of the Distortion,' by Dr H. Johnson of Shrewsbury.

Among the beneficial results of the International Exhibition, there is one which perhaps will not attract much of popular attention, but which, nevertheless, has a permanent practical value, namely, the publi-

cation of descriptive catalogues of particular collections. One of these is a *Catalogue of the Contributions from India*, compiled under the authority of the government of India: a large quarto of about 300 pages. It contains the returns from Bengal, the Punjab, the North-west Provinces, Oude, the Rajpootana States, Central India, the Martaban and Tenasserim Provinces, and of British Burmah. Madras and Bombay not having been ready in time with their returns, are omitted. It is not a mere list, but gives copious information concerning many of the articles. Thus, under *Raw Materials* we find valuable particulars concerning various kinds of iron ore, the places where they are found, and how they are worked by the natives. The Vhyndhya Hills, in the neighbourhood of Mirzapore, are described as rich in mineral wealth, producing iron which, when rolled into bars, is more flexible than English iron, and superior in strength and tenacity; and only requiring a canal or railway for the conveyance of fuel to become the Wolverhampton of India. Accounts are given of six places in which gold is found; and of twenty-seven places which contain coal; of clays and earthenware, and of building-stones; of various kinds of oil-seeds, the places of their growth, and process of extracting the oil. Concerning *Rosaa* or Scented Grass Oil, we read: 'It has been used, pure and unadulterated, by many European officers with most wonderful effect in cases of severe rheumatism, and indeed such appears to have been the effect of its application, that two good rubbings of the pure oil on the part affected produced such severe burning as to render a third application almost impracticable. In the cases brought to notice, the second application was found sufficient to insure a perfect cure.' Cotton figures largely in the catalogue, and much space is given to Indian arts and manufactures, so that it may be very advantageously consulted by persons seeking information.

The scarcity of cotton is likely soon to be attended with an unexpected depreciation in the character and value of certain kinds of calico. We allude to the discovery of a plan for cutting down the finer class of rags into a species of *shoddy*, or, as it is sometimes called, *devil's dust*, to mix in the manufacture of cotton. Already, the finer kinds of rags have risen very materially in price in consequence of their being in demand for this purpose. All who feel any interest in sustaining the integrity of British manufactures must regret this process of adulteration, which, we trust, will meet with earnest remonstrance and discouragement. It is proper, at all events, that the public should be on their guard against the deception.

TRIBUTE.

SHALL woman's worth be held disgraced,
If beauty fail the lip or cheek?
Shall stainless merit stoop abashed
To those that will not deeper seek?
Each look of thine is worth the gems
Round many royal diadems.
Of simple manners, nobly sad,
Love-winning eyes for sick or poor,
Intent to succour, making glad
The poor man by his cottage-door,
I see thee move, I see thee go,
A light amid the gloom below.

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